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ABSTRACT

This report describes efforts to assess the impact of the April 1972 issue of "Social Education," devoted to population education, and the effectiveness of various attempts to enhance the impact of the issue. Assessment was accomplished by a questionnaire administered to randomly chosen groups of members of the National Council for Social Studies. The following items from the questionnaire are discussed in this report: awareness of population education, meaning of the term; determination of whether or not population is taught; allocation of time spent on teaching about population; and attitudes toward population. Questionnaires dealing with the influence of the April issue indicated a greater awareness of the term Population Education and an increased allotment of time spent on population education in the classroom. Questionnaires assessing the impact of the enhancement techniques, which included letters sent to sensitize Council members to the April issue and a mailing of resource materials, revealed little or no impact on the proportion of subscribers who read the issue or on their likelihood of teaching the subject. (JH)

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Increasing Interest in Population Education: Evaluation of An Information Campaign*

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> In view of the important role that education can play in developing an understanding of the causes and consequences of population growth and distribution, the Commission recommends enactment of a Population Education Act to assist school systems in establishing well-planned population education programs so that present and future generations will be better prepared to meet the challenges arising from population change.
>
> The Commission on Population Growth and the American Future

Besides exhortations from presidential commissions, what can be done to promote the inclusion of population education programs in the nation's schools? This is a practical question facing each of us who is interested in having students develop competencies in analyzing and dealing with issues relating to population change. Among the change inducing techniques available to educators, the following are among those most commonly utilized to stimulate curriculum reform:

a. Use of mass media to establish a climate of opinion supportive of curricular change.

b. Use of professional journals, books, pamphlets and communications for educating and persuading school teachers, administrators and curriculum advisors (as well as teacher educators) of the need for a specified curricular change.

c. Use of educational field agents for education and persuasion regarding the need for curriculum change and for instruction in techniques facilitating change.

d. Use of national conventions, workshops, institutes, and teacher education courses for educating, motivating, and training teachers (et al) in techniques relating to a particular curricular change.

Activities noticeably missing from the list are those based upon considerations resulting from changes in power relationships among groups competing for control of the school curriculum. Although such activities and approaches to change do occur within the educational community, the prevalent change model assumes that change can be produced through an educational/persuasional process.

Last April (1972) the National Council for the Social Studies, the pro-

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fessional organization for social studies educators, attempted to introduce its membership to the concept of population education and, without necessarily endorsing the subject, encourage its membership to consider teaching about population issues. The manner in which this was done conforms to alternative "b" on the previous list of change inducing techniques. The National Council (with partial support from the Population Council) dedicated the majority of its April (1972) issue of Social Education magazine to the topic of Population Education. The issue carried a variety of articles designed to provide background information on population processes and issues. Several articles also provided teaching suggestions and reviewed available teaching resources. A Population Reference Bureau population data sheet also was included in a form that could be extracted from the issue and used in a classroom teaching situation. In general these objectives could be inferred for the issue:

a. To provide social studies educators with knowledge about population processes and issues and to introduce the term "population education."

b. To motivate social studies educators to teach about population in their courses.

c. To provide suggestions and resources that would facilitate the inclusion of population concepts in the curriculum.

In order to assess the impact of the issue and to assess its effectiveness in meeting its objectives, the Population Council awarded a small grant to the authors of this paper. In addition to assessing the impact of the issue itself, arrangements were made to attempt to enhance the impact of the issue and to determine which, if any, of the alternative treatments made the issue more successful in reaching its objectives. The next section of this paper will discuss the effect produced by the issue itself, both in the short-term and in the longer-term. This discussion will be followed by a discussion of the relative effects produced by the various efforts to enhance the issue's impact.

Issue Impact

Procedure

The April issue of Social Education was distributed so that it reached the homes of National Council members in late April and early May (1972). Prior to that time (in March) a random sample of 100 National Council members received a population education curriculum questionnaire. These 100 members were asked to respond to a series of questions about population education, about their teaching practices in regard to population, and about their attitudes toward a number of population related issues. Items on the questionnaire consisted of both open (constructed) and closed response questions. Open response questions were used to prevent cueing particular alternatives.

A second group of randomly selected teachers was sent a population education curriculum questionnaire in early June after teachers had had a brief period of time in which to read the issue. The second questionnaire was similar to the first. Most the the items were redundant with those asked on the first questionnaire. Newly appearing questions attempted to assess the short-term impact of the issue, for example, which articles teachers read (if any).

In December (1972), after teachers presumably had sufficient time to study the issue, be influenced by it, and to revise their instruction

to include population issues, a third questionnaire was distributed. This was sent to members of the first two samples as well as to a third group of teachers who had never before been contacted during the study.* The purpose of this questionnaire, similar in nature to the second, was to determine the longer-term effects produced by the April issue of Social Education. Measures available on the different groups are shown pictorially in the diagram below.

Evaluation Design

Date	Group 1 (Baseline)	Group 2 (Short-term)	Group 3 (Long-term)
March	Questionnaire	---	---
April	ISSUE DISTRIBUTED TO ALL GROUPS----------		
May	---	Questionnaire	---
December	Questionnaire	Questionnaire	Questionnaire

Outcome Variables

Although the questionnaires asked respondents to answer a variety of questions, this paper will consider only a limited number. The questions we will be concerned with deal with the following topics:

a. Awareness of the term, Population Education.

b. Meaning assigned to the term, Population Education.

c. Whether or not they teach about population.

d. Amount of time spent teaching about population.

e. Attitudes towards population issues.

Teacher Characteristics

Teachers responding to the questionnaire reported various descriptive data about themselves and the schools they teach in. On the average, the teachers have had about thirteen years of teaching experience, and teach in schools which average in size about 1700 students. Fifty-two per cent of the respondents teach in schools including the senior high grades, with five per cent having grades 7-12, twenty-eight per cent having grades 9-12, and sixteen per cent having grades 10-12. Sixteen per cent teach in junior high schools (grades 7-8 or 7-9,) while eighteen per cent reported other grades combinations including junior college. The other fourteen per cent did not indicate the grade levels in their schools.

Note.--Sampling was without replacement. Teachers were randomly selected from the membership of the National Council at the beginning of the study and were randomly assigned to one of six treatment groups. Each group contained 100 members. Descriptive data was gathered on respondents answering the first two questionnaires. No descriptive data was gathered on the third questionnaire. Because of the random selection procedure, it is assumed that the composition of the groups is equivalent.

When asked what social studies subjects they teach, the teachers responded as shown in Table 1. As can be seen,

Table 1

Percentage of Sample Teaching Various Social Studies Subjects

U.S. History	30%
World History	20%
Local/State History	2%
Government/Civics	16%
Economics	9%
Geography	8%
Sociology	6%
Psychology	4%
Problems of Democracy	6%
Other Courses	48%
Total N	(184)

U.S. History and World History are most often taught, with Government/Civics courses the only other single subject mentioned by more than ten per cent of the respondents.

One other interesting datum has to do with the reported teaching of Social Education. When asked: "Do you read Social Education magazine regularly?", seventy-six per cent answered in the affirmative.

Results

By comparing questionnaire responses of teachers from before the special issue with those responding after the issue, we can examine possible short- and long-term impacts of the issue on attitudes and teaching behavior.

Awareness of the term "population education" is one factor which we expected to increase as a result of the special issue. As seen in Table 2, awareness, as measured by responses to the question: "Have you ever heard of the term "Population Education", increases dramatically, from forty-eight to eight-five per cent responding yes.

Table 2

Awareness of "Population Education"

"Have you ever heard of the term "Population Education?"	Pre-Issue Responses	Short-Term Post-Issue Responses
Yes	48%	85%
No	52%	15%
Total N	(60)	(124)

*Column Percentages. Frequencies in Parens. This question was not asked of the long-term group.

For purposes of subsequent analyses, the short- and long-term post-issue responses are for those respondents who reported that they had read more than one article in the special issue; this control was deemed necessary because if the respondent had not read the issue, it presumably could have no direct impact on him.

All three groups were asked what the term "population education" meant to them. The open-ended responses were categorized as shown below in Table 3.

Table 3

Meaning of Population Education

"What does 'population education' mean to you?"	Pre-Issue Responses	Short-Term Post-Issue Responses	Long-Term Post-Issue Responses
No response	30%	16%	18%
1. Study and/or Transmission of Contemporary Knowledge	15%	22%	18%
2. Study of Contemporary Problems	27%	28%	14%
3. Study of Historical Information	-	1%	4%
4. 1 and 2 above	17%	10%	14%
5. 1 and 3 above	-	-	7%
6. 2 and 3 Above	-	-	2%
7. 1 and 2 and 3 above	5%	4%	7%
8. Other	7%	19%	16%
Total N	(60)	(79)	(184)

The most striking feature of Table 3 is the decrease in the "no response" category from pre- to post-issue groups. The decrease from thirty to sixteen per cent for the first two groups, and the fact that the percentage remains decreased at eighteen per cent for the long-range groups lends some support to the idea that the special issue may have had some impact, in terms of awareness and definition, for its readers.

Although some evidence presented above suggests that the Social Education issue had some impact on awareness of and the meaning attributed to 'population education', changes in teaching are more important effects to examine. While sixty-eight per cent of the pre-issue group reported teaching about population education, seventy-nine per cent of the short-term post-issue group who had read the issue reported teaching about population education. Reading the issue does appear to have had a short-term an impact, although only seventy three per cent of the long-term post-issue group who read the issue claimed that they taught population education in their classes, suggesting the absence of permanent changes in teaching behavior resulting from the special issue.

For those reporting teaching about population education, the short-term post-issue respondents who read one or more articles reported spending more time on this topic than the pre-issue respondents. Table 4 show the differences between all three groups.

Table 4

Time Devoted to Teaching About Population Education

"About how much time (in total) do you spend teaching about population education?	Pre-Issue Respondents	Short-Term Post-Issue Respondents	Long-Term Post-Issue Respondents
1-2 days	42%	24%	21%
1 week	30%	46%	39%
2-3 weeks	25%	22%	29%
4-6 weeks	-	4%	9%
more than 6 weeks	3%	4%	2%
Total N	(36)	(46)	(171)

For the first two groups, it can be seen that the major difference is between those who spend only one or two days on the topic as compared with those spending at least a week teaching about population education. Compared to the first two groups, the long-term post-issue teachers who read one or more of the articles appear to spend the most time on this topic. They have the lowest percentage in the 1-2 day category, and the highest in the 2-3 and 4-6 week categories. Increases in the intensity, or time commitment, of population education teaching, therefore, may be another outcome of the special issue.

Change in teacher attitudes about population education are another possible outcome of the special issue. From a set of attitude items to which teachers in this study responded, three have been selected for analysis. In each case, the respondent was presented with a "futures" attitude item, and was asked to respond to it in two ways. First, he was asked to indicate whether he thought the condition or event in the item would come about in fifty years. Second, he was asked to approve or disapprove of the condition or event, assuming that it would take place.

The first attitude item was stated: "Fifty years from now a government commission will recommend that the U.S. establish a policy designed to produce 'zero population growth.' Table 5 shows the patterns of prediction and approval/disapproval for the three groups in the study. No major differences appear between groups on either the prediction or the judgment for this attitude

Table 5

Attitudes Toward Imposed Zero Population Growth

Prediction	Pre-Issue Responses	Short-Term Post-Issue Responses	Long-Term Post-Issue Responses
Will happen	61%	62%	61%
Will not happen	39%	38%	39%
Judgment			
Approve	59%	52%	62%
Disapprove	41%	48%	38%
Total N	(49)	(78)	(173)

item. It is interesting that more than half in each group predicts this outcome, and the attitude toward that outcome is favorable -- from fifty-two to sixty-two per cent approve. For the first two groups slightly fewer are willing to endorse the policy than predict it, but for the long-term group there is no difference between prediction and judgment.

The second attitude item suggests the following situation: "Fifty years from now the 'population problem' will have been proven to be a myth." Table 6 shows the responses to this item. About one-fifth in each group predict that the population "myth" will be exploded, although a considerably higher proportion would like to see such an outcome. Perhaps this difference represents wishful thinking -- those approving of that end might believe that the world would be better with one less problem in the twenty-first century. Although the long-term group has a higher percentage approving the outcome than the other groups, no inference about the effects of the special issue is possible, given the lack of a

Table 6

Attitudes Toward Exploding the Population Problem Myth

Prediction	Pre-Issue Responses	Short-Term Post-Issue Responses	Long-Term Post-Issue Responses
Will happen	16%	18%	22%
Will not happen	84%	82%	78%
Judgment			
Approve	28%	28%	41%
Disapprove	72%	72%	59%
Total N	(49)	(74)	(171)

corresponding increase for the short-term group.

The third item read: "Fifty years from now schools will educate children about the implications, positive and negative, of coninual population growth in the United States." Responses on both the prediction and judgment of this item were unanomous -- between ninety-seven and one-hundred per cent of all groups predicted and endorsed this idea. This is not surprising, but many of the same teachers approving of this outcome for the future are not implementing it for the present in their own classrooms.

Enhancement Effects

Procedure

The enhancement conditions were predicated upon the assumption that teacher's would need to be sensitized to the issue in order to stimulate them to read it. It was also assumed that the more reinforcing communications a teacher received regarding the need to teach about population, the more likely the teacher would be to begin teaching about population.

Although forewarning is typically associated with a hardening of attitude in the attitude change literature, there is data indicating that forewarning a person about a forthcoming communication may serve to facilitate reception of the communication under certain conditions. These conditions are associated with affect-carrying issues about which a person is uninformed or upon which he has not

taken a steadfast position. Other conditions include those when the forewarning serves to sensitize a person to a forthcoming communication from which he can personally benefit. Reader's Digest, for example, has used this technique to sensitize potential subscribers to contest entry forms that it sends under separate cover from that of the sensitizing letter. It is this type of sensitizing communication which the study employed.

In March (1972) each of three randomly selected groups of 100 National Council members were sent a letter by U.S. mail. The contents of the letter alerted the Nation Council members to the forthcoming Population Education issue of Social Education and suggested that the Council members attend to the issue. In addition the letter also referred to the report of the Commission on Population Growth and the American Future and exhorted teachers to begin teaching about population so that their students would become informed decision-makers.

In late April and May a second, "reminder," letter was sent to one of the three groups contacted previously. The reminder letter again referred to the Commission's call for a national population policy, the need for preparing students who could intelligently deal with such issues, the role teachers could play in meeting this need, and the existence of the April (1972) issue of Social Education as a valuable resource. In addition three resource items were mentioned as possible sources of background material and lessons appropriate for use in a class. Teacher wanting more information were encouraged to contact the Population Education Project.

A modified version of this reminder letter was sent to a second of the three groups originally contacted prior to the issues' publication. A packet of resource materials was sent with the letter. It was assumed that the materials would make it easier for a teacher to develop instruction about population and that it might further encourage them to read the Social Education issue and heed its message to teach about population. Among the items included in the resource package were the following:

a. Man's Population Predicament: Population Bulletin 27 (2) (Population Reference Bureau).

b. Population by Valerie K. Oppenheimer. Foreign Policy Association Headline Series No. 206 (FDA).

c. U.S.: Population Growth and Family Planning: A Review of the Literature by Robin Elliot, Lynn C. Landman, Richard Lincoln and Theordore Tsurouka. (Planned Parenthood-World Population).

d. Population Profiles Units 1 and 2. (Center for Information on America).

e. Population and the American Future: Excerpts Studies in Family Planning May 1972 (Population Council).

f. Where Will the Next 50 Million Americans Live? Population Bulletin (Population Reference Bureau).

g. List of Planned Parenthood Publications.

h. Several reprints of articles dealing with population and population education.

i. A response card that could be used to request literature or family planning and birth control.

The third group received a questionnaire designed to assess the short-term impact of the initial sensitizing letter. The design for this aspect of the study is shown below.

Experimental Design

Date	Group 4 Forewarned	Group 5 Forewarned & Reminded	Group 6 Forewarned, Reminded and Sent Materials
March	Letter	Letter	Letter
April	Special Issue	Special Issue	Special Issue
May	Questionnaire	Reminder Letter	Reminder and Materials
December	Questionnaire	Questionnaire	Questionnaire

Findings.

The sensitizing letter was designed to influence the rate of reading of the special issue, but this did not turn out to be the case. The proportion of the group receiving the letter who reported having read any of the special issue articles was identical to those not receiving the letter -- sixty-four per cent in each case. The impact of the sensitizing letter therefore, has to be judged as insignificant.

Another part of the media campaign was the mailing, to a random sample of one hundred subscribers of Social Education, of a packet of population education materials. A third part of the campaign consisted of a "reminder letter," sent to two hundred subscribers one month after publication of the special issue. It was predicted that the group which received neither item would be least likely to have read the issue and to teach about population education in his classes. The group which received both the materials packet and the reminder letter was predicted to be highest on these two measures, and the group receiving only the reminder letter was predicted to be between the other two groups.

The group receiving neither the letter nor the materials packet has sixty-nine per cent who reported having read the special issue, as compared with fifty-seven per cent for the reminder letter group and seventy-seven per cent for the letter

plus materials packet group. Thus, the results were not as expected, although the group receiving both items did have the highest rate reading one or more articles. Perhaps the reminder letter was ignored (just as the pre-issue sensitizing letter seemed to be) unless it was received in connection with the materials packet.

The group receiving neither item contained sixty reporting that they taught about population education, as compared to seventy-one per cent receiving the reminder letter. This finding was as expected, but only fifty-seven per cent of those receiving both the letter and the materials packet reported teaching the subject. This is a disappointing result, in light of the extensive amount and quality of the materials in the packet. No ready explanation for this seeming lack of impact on teaching is available.

In short, the information campaign has to be judged a failure. It did not increase the number of subscribers reading the issue and did not promote increases in numbers teaching the subject in their classes.

Summary

The impact of the special Social Education did appear to have influenced the awareness of persons who read one or more of the articles. Those that reported having read from the issue were more aware of the term 'population education,' and were better able to formulate a definition of the term. Impact on actual teaching of this subject appeared greater over the short-term than the long-term, although the differences were small. Further, the time committed to teaching about population education increased with both the short- and long-term post-issue groups. Finally, there were no discernable effects on teachers' attitudes resulting from the special issue.

The information campaign, consisting of pre-issue sensitizing letters, post-issue reminder letters, and extensive packets of information of use to classroom teachers, had little or no impact on the proportion of subscribers reading the issue. The likelihood that teachers would teach the subject was also not increased by the media campaign, which has to be judged a failure in light of these results.